

# The Icelandic Canadian

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## THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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# EDITORIAL

Over a year and a half ago there was begun in the Province of Manitoba one of the most exhaustive investigations, ever undertaken, into all aspects of liquor control. The Royal Commission of five under the chairmanship of the Hon. John Bracken, a former premier of Manitoba, and later the leader of the Conservative Party in Canada, has now completed its report. The implementation of some or all of its recommendations now faces the Manitoba government at the next session of its legislature. Judging by the wide diversity of opinion expressed by individuals and those submitted by many and varied organizations through briefs to the investigation committee this will not be a simple matter. Finding a solution satisfactory to all factions will not only be an impossibility, but will also be both a thankless and a delicate task for those concerned with solving the problems of effective controls and administration.

The problem of use and abuse of alcohol is as old as world civilization, but the increasing complexities of modern life seem to have aggravated out of all proportion the dangers of the excessive use of liquors.

It is neither the intent nor function of this brief comment on this timely and controversial subject to assess or evaluate, nor even to deal specifically with, any of the recommendations made in this twenty volume report. Reading it, however, solely from the humanitarian point of view one cannot help admiring the concern of the members of the commission for the welfare of the 10,000 unfortunate alcoholics in our province whose numbers are increasing at an estimated rate of 700 a year. It is a well known

fact that among them are many who formerly held positions of prominence and trust, and enjoyed enviable reputations in our society. An estimated 10,000 others of our provincial population of approximately 850,000 require help owing to excessive use of alcohol. The report makes a strong appeal for the treatment and rehabilitation of the victims, and an educational campaign to discourage excessive consumption of alcohol by others. The report further recommends an effective compulsory educational program for minors through our schools and public press. The churches, assisted by other social organizations, will undoubtedly, as in the past, play a prominent part in this educational program. Such an undertaking deserves the support of every parent. Obviously the effectiveness of this educational program will be largely determined by the attitude taken, and the example set, in the home.

The readers of these observations may share to some extent the opinion of the writer that a more appropriate topic could have been selected for the December issue of *The Icelandic Canadian*. It is not untimely, however, to point out that the festive season of Christmas, in the past, has often provided the occasion for lamentable headlines directly attributable to the revelries of a Season originally intended for a more solemn and sacred form of celebration.

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN  
WISHES ALL ITS READERS

A MERRY CHRISTMAS  
and a  
PROSPEROUS  
HAPPY NEW YEAR.

-J. K. L.

## IN THE EDITOR'S CONFIDENCE

Constructive suggestions often come through articles and news items sent to The Icelandic Canadian. One such item of unusual significance formed the theme of an article in the last issue under the title "We have a Story to Tell", by The Rev. Sveinbjorn Olafsson.

That story, he very properly points out, should be told by the Icelanders themselves. The Icelanders of the first generation or two occupy a position of special advantage for writing that story. Some of them spent their early youth in Iceland; some speak English and Icelandic equally well; a large majority have some knowledge of Icelandic; all are imbued with the spirit which made possible that which has been achieved by the Icelandic group in these two nations. They have an understanding of the background while at the same time the American and Canadian scene is to them a living present. These people should be able to tell that story, which Sveinbjorn Olafsson envisions, more realistically than others who do not occupy that position of advantage.

By way of example of what could and should be done the writer of the article makes three suggestions: a biography of Leif Eiriksson; a book on Iceland, well illustrated, for high school children in this land; completion of the translation of the Passion Hymns, parts of which have already been beautifully translated by Bishop C. V. Pilcher.

This is the very time when work of this type should be done; those who can look in both directions will soon be leaving the scene. Rev. Olafsson's challenge should not go unheeded.

★

The writer of this note has an apology to make to the American-Scandinavian Foundation which he now tenders. Inadvertently he forgot to give the Foundation credit for the excellent article "Sagasteads of Fire and Ice" by Hedin Bronner, which was originally published in The American-Scandinavian Review and republished in the last issue of The Icelandic Canadian. The Foundation not only gave permission to publish the article but kindly loaned the half-tone cuts as well.

The occasion may well be used to remedy another omission which is of long standing. For many years back, in fact back to the first year of publication, this magazine has received excellent co-operation from the editors and publishers of both Heimskringla and Lögberg. News items have been gathered from the columns of the two weeklies, back numbers made available to members of the editorial staff, cuts readily supplied when available. Just by way of illustration it may be pointed out that the Columbia Press Ltd. supplied no less than sixteen cuts for the last issue. By way of defence it might be pointed out that whenever possible The Icelandic Canadian has reciprocated.

—W. J. L.

## HOME IN A NEW LAND

# Thrill and Joy of Promise

by G. F. GUDMUNDSSON

Looking for some calves, and making my way through brush and undergrowth to the east end of the coulee pasture, I came, for the first time in years, upon the site of our homestead hut, our first habitation in Saskatchewan. It did not merit the appellation of a log cabin; it was simply a dugout in the coulee bank, the ends and the back bank forming the three walls, while the front and roof were made of poles and odd ends of used boards, shipped as part freight in a settler's car from Winnipeg. The roof was topped with stripped sod.

Now there remained only a slight depression in the bank, on which nature had laid a grass-thatched cover over the years. Coming to this selected place, I stopped and humbly stood in reverent remembrance. For me this was holy ground and the trespasser here should, "put off his shoes."

Here we had, desperately poor, spent our first winter and put in our first Christmas in a strange land, and here as if by magic, mother had made it a warm, glowing, candlelit Christmas.

Somehow she found something new for each one of us six children, and for me as the first born, there was a brand-new, man-styled suit—that is new as mother had made it from left-over, handed-down garments, yet never was a young man prouder of his attire.

There was no turkey with trimmings. Bush rabbits were our main meat ra-

tion that winter. But on each end of the table were stacks of crisp thin-fried bread cakes, a national Yuletide food in the Old Country, artistically designed and cut out, mainly in leaf-like pattern, inside of the circled rim.

And here my father, though an unschooled layman, taught the catechism to seven or eight youngsters that winter, and prepared them for their confirmation which would be conducted by the minister coming out from Winnipeg in the spring.

Recently I talked with a lady who had been one of the girls in that group. "As humans do," she said, "I have faltered, but since that winter I have never doubted what your father so persistently instilled in us: "There is a moral law controlling the universe, which people and nations violate at their peril."

Father had managed to transport our books, so we had good reading, and for many an hour, in this lowly hut, we sat at the feet of the masters of all ages.

The following spring we were hosts to a large family of settlers, who in the homesteaders tradition, stayed with us until some shelter had been put up on their own holdings. In some strange way, arrangements were made for their accommodation in our cramped quarters and for their presence at our table, goodwill and generous hearts making



up for the austere fare. For sleeping, bunks were made up in tiers, in ship's cabin style, and there was even the common scramble of a "lower berth."

It was a time of challenge, testing men's mettle, but likewise, as often where men have broken new ground, it was the golden age of our settlement. There was, in the hearts of men, the

thrill and joy of promise and high hopes for the future.

The above appeared in the Star-Phoenix of Saskatoon on November 9, 1955. The author Gudmundur F. Gudmundsson is a son of the late Friðrik and Thorgerður Guðmundsson, pioneer homesteaders in the Mozart district in Saskatchewan. Gudmundur was raised on his father's homestead and at present is one of the leading farmers of that district. He was Reeve of the Rural Municipality of Elfros for a number of years. —Ed.

## BETEL OLD FOLKS HOME

Betel was founded by the joint efforts of the Ladies' Aid of the Icelandic Lutheran Church of Winnipeg and the Icelandic Lutheran Synod, but it has, from its beginning some forty years ago, enjoyed the support of the Icelandic community as a whole regardless of church affiliations. The Home appealed directly to the hearts of all Icelandic people on this continent as no other institution has done. By making donations to Betel, large or small, the people sought to express their respect and gratitude to the Icelandic pioneers to whom they owed so much. Generous contributions together with the kindly and faithful services of the staff of the Home and its Board of Directors, have provided hundreds of elderly people with care and comfort during these many years; and Betel has become known as the "Home of the Happy Sunset."

The successful operation of Betel did not only make Icelandic people everywhere conscious of their duties to the aged and infirm, it encouraged them to build and operate other old folk's homes, where they were needed. Betel had set the example.

This original Home is now in urgent need of renovation and additional structures so that it may function efficiently and accommodate the many

applicants awaiting admission. It is estimated that the total cost of the necessary improvements and expansion will be approximately \$180,000.00.

The Government of Manitoba has made a grant of \$42,500 towards this project which has encouraged the Board of Directors to seek subscriptions from the Icelandic public for the balance of the necessary funds. The campaign, headed by Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson is now under way. Mrs. J. Augusta Tallman is campaign supervisor; Mr. Grettir Eggertson, chairman of the Central Committee; Mr. B. Egilson, vice-chairman and chairman of the Advisory Committee; Mr. Gus Gottfred, vice-chairman; Mr. K. W. Johannson, treasurer; Miss Stefanie Bjarnason secretary; Miss Alma Elding, secretary and Judge W. J. Lindal chairman of the Publicity Committee. A large number of people have volunteered to serve on the various committees. The Central Committee hopes that local campaign committees will be formed in all Icelandic communities, being confident that people of Icelandic descent will wish to show their appreciation for the humanitarian service rendered by Betel throughout the years and will want to aid in rebuilding this old and beloved institution.

—I. J.

# Thin Threads of Thought

by FRED A BJORN



Freda Bjorn

Imagination is the fruit of the mind; when ripened with joy, food for the soul. I like to return to the valley of my thoughts and linger awhile in the scenes of my childhood, where I meet many dear friends. I seek with the gayest of thoughts a little man, thin-faced and wrinkled with humor, disfigured in gait, but with a light step and a rhythm of his own.

We children run south of town in the late afternoon and wait for him by the old, red, rusty bridge. In the early spring we can see our shimmering reflections in the narrow stream below, but now in mid-summer there is just enough water to cool our dusty feet. I think he is as glad to see us waiting for him as we are of the ride home, for I don't ever remember seeing a shadow of despair upon his features. He has a way of twisting his ruddy mustache and turning his head to one

side, as if his cheerfulness were overpowering him. His everlasting goodwill leaves the seed of gaiety in my thought, and I find it in full bloom when I think of the postman and the ride home over the curving wagon road south of my home town.

The ride comes to an end at the main grocery store, that also serves the community as a post office, where he delivers the daily mail. The store building is low and wide, with a long narrow platform, and worn, wooden steps that make a squeaking noise that varies with the burden they carry. There are many familiar figures sitting on the south side of the entrance to the store waiting for the evening mail. It must be more of a tradition than a necessity, for I feel sure many of them have never received a letter.

I see a stocky figure there, swinging his legs and talking to himself, seemingly lost in the enchantment of his thoughts. His small beady blue eyes flash with humor and express the music within. I kneel down and adjust my shoes near him to listen to his chanting, for he is a chattering poet and reminds me of a murmuring river. I can skip a long time on the melody of his flow. I think he returns to me in the kinship of harnessing my thoughts in rhyme and rhythm.

I can tell what farmers are in town by looking at their horses tied to the posts nearby, whose restless manes indicate a lengthy sojourn, or what farmers have just arrived by the drowsy feeling of rest that hovers over their

horses as they sleep, favoring one foot at a time. The manner of their care appears in their reactions as I pet their heads.

With sweet expectations I enter the store, and immediately dignity and pride possess me when I see the proprietor. His tall, stately shoulders carry the air of authority associated with commercial wealth, yet he is a richer man in his own heritage. Children are out of place in his aura, yet he teaches us the lesson of respect; and I find him in my thinking as I classify business men by his measure.

And now my thin threads of thought are weaving a web of gratitude around the only clerk in the store. I realize that he is the direct opposite of what a salesman should be, for I never see him chatting in a friendly mood with anyone. He is a tall, thin man with grey hair and sharp eyes, who makes us feel very uncomfortable whenever we behave like children. His soft, quick step makes him appear as if he were coming out of nowhere. He never allows us children to linger in the store to look at things; he silently pushes us out like farmers' wives clear their yards of chickens with their aprons. He is even annoyed with the grown-ups when they handle his wares, or when the ladies wish to see the bright, shining bales of calico, or the bundles of woollens piled neatly on his spotless shelves. Whenever we have a nickel to spend he gives us a disgusted look because we waste it on candy.

I follow him around in the store, and he asks me several times what I want; but I only shake my head, wishing my father had been more forceful in sending my younger brother, even if my mother had objected, as it would have been serious to me then if my

teasing playmates had heard of my mission. Finally the opportunity comes and I say quickly and in a low voice:

"A plug of Yankee Girl tobacco."

With an understanding look he puts it in a sack and hands it to me. I will seldom ask for it by name after that, for he will have a way of knowing when I linger near. He shows me that the gem of thoughtfulness comes in many different settings. I think of him when I polish this jewel of thought.

With light-footed glee I rush out of the store for a long cool drink of deep well water, and I put the rusty dipper back in its place above the hand-worn handle as my eyes begin to search for a shadow near the barn west of the well. In those days I had never seen a Jack-in-the-box, but now, whenever I do, I think of a little middle-aged man, called the proprietor's shadow. He is like a half grown boy, who obeys his master like a faithful child, his arms and legs always in motion. His sweet, simple soul reflects a flowering weed in a fallow field and, when his chores are done, he comes out to play with the rest of the children in the same youthful spirit as ours. On bright winter nights he pulls up our sleighs when the hill is alive with figures, and many a little one runs to his protection. We are able to tell the time of day when we see his jaunty figure, swinging a slender willow bough, on his way south of town to bring home the cows. We follow him on the cow trails through the woods, to listen to him mimic the bold crow, the first sign of spring on the cold prairies. My childhood glee still echoes in the shrieking of the crow.

Now he takes us to a wide clearing in the woods, leading to a sloping meadow that serves as a graveyard, to see a patch of wild tiger lilies in full

bloom, their orange tints only surpassed by the sun shades. Often he turns off the trail where patches of violets are in bloom and, with the same shyness that characterizes the violet, he pulls the ferns apart so we can pick the flowers.

I can still see his rough, soiled hands holding the tender stems of fresh violets. He also knows where the sweetest berries grow and lifts us up to reach the fat ripe plums on the highest limbs. But, if there is a nest in the tree, he does not allow us to go near it, for he guards the robins like his precious hens. I can still hear his soft laughter when he tells us about the baby robins bursting their pale blue shells and much too young for us to visit, for if we were to touch even a twig of their nest the mother robin might leave them. He is innocence incarnate, and gives me the key to simplicity that unlocks the secrets of nature. He lives in my love of sticks, stones, and earthly air.

As my thoughts hover over this part of town with admiration for the wealth of the store and the comfort of the big house, I find my memory clinging to the blossoms of lilacs in full bloom south of the house. The fragrance of spring after a long winter is as refreshing as mountain air. And now I feel a longing tugging at my heart to go further south and visit my old home. I will only circle the sacred ground and catch a glimpse of mother kneeling in front of a wide open oven, taking out steaming loaves of delicious brown bread. There is a feeling of domestic friendliness around an old wood range, when its fire is crackling up the chimney and its warmth radiates through the house. I never resist the temptation to touch one when I see it cold and inert and think every

blister is worth it.

For a moment, while I listen, I hear the high clear notes of my father singing to his heart's content in the long twilight before mother settles down to read to us; yet, here I cannot linger, for personal interference will cloud my thinking and dim my sight. I will look for the little tow-headed girl I used to be, hiding under the front porch, for the visiting Doctor is in town and, after one frightful experience with him I usually find a safe place to hide the day I know he is in town.

The Doctor is a man of middle height and he stands on the bridge of agelessness. His greyish-brown hair is not unlike the fur cap he wears in the winter time, and being quite long, it almost hides his thick neck. His powerful, broad shoulders seem to carry his whole weight and his body bends forward with his firm step. But it is his long, almost claw-like hands I recall the most. They remind me of a vicious wolf. In those tender years that was the only wild animal I had seen, but now when I visit the zoo I see his likeness in ill-tempered bears. (I am not at all surprised to hear that he is only partly Icelandic.)

He serves the community from a neighboring town, once or twice a month, as the weather permits, and his office is in the open on the floor of the only drug store. He has a scolding attitude. When he enters a sick room he shames people into health by minimizing their illness. Yet, as I look back I wonder what compensation, if any, did he receive for all his work. While skilfully attending to us youngsters, he tells us if we make a move or a sound he will cut our heads off, and being reared in an atmosphere of gentleness we believe him. Once I closed my father's pocket-knife on a fat fist and in-



fection set in before his next visit. As I left with my father to have it attended to my mother's famous last words: "Do not disgrace me", recorded this incident. She told me that quality of character is revealed under stress or pain.

I think as I dig my free fingers into my father's large calloused hand that no building of character is worth such agony. I always look at his hands in my dealings with doctors, for that doctor of my childhood left a mental scar on my soul and a deep, thin, V-shaped physical scar on my right hand. As I hide from him under the porch I trace with my bare hand the knotted oak roots that curve on the ground and, when the Doctor has gone, measure their tall shade over the house before I skip north on the two-way, wooden plank that forms the narrow side of it. We know of few places where we can lift up the planks in hopes of finding a nickel—but never finding one.

Now I see a pitiful old man coming toward me—the first cripple I have ever seen. His legs form the figure X when he stands still, and he bends so far forward that he is no taller than his cane. He has to hold up his head with his left fist so he can see where he is going. He struggles a step or two at a time on his way for the evening mail, and on his return trip there are papers pressed close to his side under his arm.

We, children, always pause in our play when we see him coming although he never speaks to us—but perhaps his childhood memories clouded ours. Years later I learned it was malnutrition that deformed him. With the same awe and compassion I felt for him in my former days I think of him now when I hear of the homeless and hungry all over the world. I

also find myself wishing that I could pick him up and carry him wherever he wished to go. I know now such a valiant spirit never could have been carried. I am sure his courage outlived his crippled body.

In the center of town I see the church and the hotel across the way. Here terrific action confronts me all at once as I enter the hotel. I am older now and my thoughts are not as tender. I can almost greet the whole family with a matter-of-fact air as I see everybody working. There are long white tablecloths to be ironed, the old leather furniture to be dusted, the back porch to be swept, and endless trips up and down the stairs to be made before the delicious smell of food comes from the kitchen.

Here in this hotel there is gaiety and good living. Mother is in the essence of her heritage, managing a large household. Here also is the sanctuary of the only titled citizen in the community, the Colonel.

The Colonel is a tall angular figure with the manner of a country gentleman, but not the character. As I see him sitting in his study, with one leg crossed over the other, smoking an old curved pipe with the odor of stale tobacco, he pauses in his reading and rests his glasses on his high, bridged nose, looking directly at me as he starts to tell the most fantastic stories I ever heard, building himself up as the hero of them all. There is a loneliness in his unreality and I hope some day he unwinds them all and . . . finds himself.

How vividly I remember the church across the way and the many beloved scenes: the community Christmas tree with the short, colored candles all aglow on Christmas Eve, and the joy of hearing our names called when a



present is found for us under the tree; Easter mornings, with the stiff, starched white dresses and the natural colored straw hats, tied with wide ribbons under the chin, and the black patent leather shoes, as I tiptoe into the church, eyes downcast, firmly holding my mother's hand.

Here in the church I like to linger and watch the whole community enter the double-doors. Somehow the women all look alike. Perhaps it is their hats, with the wide brims and high crowns favoring satin bows or thin black feathers, all with the same home-made touch. They are buxom and motherly and I know I must follow their way of life to reach my destiny.

Their children stiffen (in a disciplined way) as they step aside for their elders, yet I see the gleam of divine humor in their eyes. It is difficult for me to recognize the men as I seldom think of them in "dressed-up" attire. I miss the wide straw hats, the red handkerchiefs around their necks, the odor of horses and the sweat of the brows, all forming the ensemble of the comfortable blue overall. And now I hear the church bells ringing in the white steeple and I know how proud the little man called the Proprietor's Shadow must feel, for it has been his honor to pull the ropes that ring the bells as far back as I can remember. Then there is the wonder of the organ, with its beautiful strains supplemented with the melodious voices of the choir. Every fiber of my being feels at home.

As I turn my thoughts and leave this scene I find myself shaking an old iron gate just north of the church, very heavily locked, and there comes a little old lady, running in haste to greet me, although she really does not have the time to visit with me, nor does she open her gate to every one.

I enter and follow her to the back door which she just left and wait as she unlocks it. I am fascinated by all the keys around her waist. She must have something very valuable in her possession, as I never saw a lock or key in my house, and I follow her as she unlocks and locks room after room. I revisit her many times in hopes of seeing into the next room. It is not until I follow her to her barn and wait as she unlocks the barn door, and see her cow locked and chained that I realize her mania, for who would steal a cow? Everybody has one.

Here is a letter written by her daughter addressed to my father, and I am running home to the hotel to give it to him. It must be very important, as I cannot recollect seeing a letter coming to him before. Mother and Dad are having their late afternoon coffee at the kitchen table, and we must wait until my older sister comes home, because the letter is written in English. As my sisters, giggling hysterically, read page after page, my father becomes impatient and remarks when finished:

"If the lady wishes to scold me about her old cow, why does she not walk across the path and speak to me in words I can understand?"

This is the first time I hear my mother voice her reaction to a foreign language. She is furious that my father should be attacked in a language he can not understand. It seems strange to me that there should be anything in this world my mother can not understand. With her power of thought she firmly holds her large family together. My father is different. He never voices his opinion nor raises his voice to anyone. The only thing that sets him luminously alive is music!

And now I leave that scene and follow the well-trodden path on the west side of the street. I hear music coming from the house next door. It has a soothing spiral effect and lifts me above all human emotion as I know one of the beautiful girls who live there is playing the piano and singing. Often I think of the beautiful girls who grew up in that little town. I never ask about any one individually, as I like to stretch my imagination to its heights and find them there . . . where I know they belong. I pass the Farmer's store where a nodding look gave many a hard lump of sugar candy, yet, I have no desire to enter the store and awaken my memories. Perhaps it is because we were always so welcome there. There is an air of abundance and freedom around this place that leaves no room for longing. This store is tucked away in my memory not as a place of business but a home of a dear friend.

I follow my thoughts to the brow of the north hill, to gaze on the wide fields which can hold my attention at any time of the year. I love to watch the plow in the late fall curve the wide deep furrows of rich black soil, the salt-and-pepper look as the first fall of snow sprinkles its flawless flakes, the crunching sound of firm snow under foot as I walk along in the pure white air, or the snow glistening in the sunlight like a shimmering sea of jewels. But in the early spring I think I love the fields the most when bursting blades of grass paint them a rich, emerald shade, which will turn by mid-summer into golden grain. When the south wind sweeps low over the fields they look like rolling waves of an ocean. No wonder the sea will look very familiar when I see it for the first time. But imagination has

a way of winding beloved scenes. Here comes a team of bays, Pat and Mike, pulling a wagon up the hill. I dare not look at the driver, for I love him so much that my thoughts will scatter with homesickness.

I will turn with the wind and lean on the sturdy oaks shading the old community hall and choose a day from the past filled with activity; a warm summer day, the Fourth of July, or the Second of August, Iceland's Independence Day. I shall gaze at the men sitting under the trees and chewing at straws. We children are not at play, for we are in our best clothes. How awkward we look, as most of us have not reached the size of our dresses or completely outgrown them.

There is a strong aroma of coffee coming from the basement of the hall and a low hum of chatter, as at any large gathering, only this has a melodious sound. It is the sound of the mother tongue. I believe an Icelandic soul accepts with highest respect another language, but never turns foreign.

I follow the trail west and turn south in search of the old school house . . . but now I see the white cottage of the Minister, whose confirmation class is my destination. I pause with bated breath before I knock at the front door, which is only used by us, children, while going there to classes. The back door is entirely different. The Minister's beautiful and gracious wife holds her door open for any youngster.

Now I hear the heavy firm step of the Minister as he opens the door and I tiptoe into the parlor and sit on the edge of my chair. He is a tall, stately man with dark hair and dark mustache. There is always a glint of humor streaming from his eyes and a sense of knowledge, as if he knew every

thought you tried to hide. I can hear him tell the class—"Blessed is the man who gets an education, but twice blessed is the man who earns his education".—I wonder why he is the most intellectual man in the whole community; then come to the conclusion that it must be because he studies the Book of Divine laws. I find myself looking, as I enter a church, for a Minister like him, big of body, soul and mind.

Yet I cannot leave this scene without looking across the street and greeting with highest respect a very fat lady with a heavy step who mothers a house full of little children. She is never without a wide friendly smile on her beloved face. I am sure she taught me the shame of complaining.

I reach the old school house and long for a scene I love the best, a hushed room listening to Tales from Dickens, but the church music keeps resounding in my ears, drawing me back, for my father is the soul of the music and returns to me when old melodies cradle my heart and I find my mother when I quote this couplet I read somewhere long ago:

"Richer than I you cannot be,  
For I have a mother who reads to me".

We all have a hometown. It is the roots of our minds and flowers forever in our thinking!

### MY FATHER'S SINGING HEART

I find him when I see an open field  
Of curving meadows fragrant with the dew,  
As rising vapors let their shadows yield  
The mystic shades that border on the blue,  
And often in the stillness of the night  
As stars are paving their high silver way,  
I feel his presence like the beam of light  
That lifts the darkness to unfold the day,  
Yet when I hear soft tones of music blend  
Their rhythmic melodies into the air  
His ever-present spirit seems to send  
Its harmony, and I become aware  
Of echoes, where his voice is deep and strong  
As if his soul were cradled in a song

—Freda Bjorn, Seattle

Tacoma News Tribune  
March 12, 1955

## Third Time Medallist

Sharon Johnson, eleven year old daughter of Dr. and Mrs. A. V. Johnson of 217 Hertford boulevard, Tuxedo, was for the third time in three years awarded a silver medal and Frederick Harris scholarship by the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto. The

awards are given to the student receiving the highest marks in the provincial in each grade of the conservatory practical examinations. This year's award was for grade four piano examinations. Sharon was previously winner in grade two and three.

## *A Pilgrimage to Norseland*

by PROFESSOR RICHARD BECK

(Continued from Fall Issue)

After visiting other historical places in and around Trondheim, we headed south on board one of Norway's modern coastal steamers. Early the next morning we arrived in Molde, a charming town located on the Romsdalsfjord and known as "The City of Roses", but even more renowned for its environs. It is said that on a bright day, one can see from the town no less than eighty-seven snow-crowned mountain peaks in all their grandeur.

In Molde I recalled that Björnstjerne Björnsson, the famed Norwegian poet attended school there, and that he was not particularly interested in the required subjects; on the other hand he read extensively, including Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, and Björnson's peasant stories amply reveal the influence of the Icelandic sagas in his literary style.

Some of the most prominent chieftains in Iceland of old came from Romsdal, as did Ásgerður, the grandmother of Njáll, immortalized in the great saga bearing his name.

Farther south we stopped at Aalesund, a great fishing center, whose enterprising herring fishermen are no strangers to the coastal waters of Northern Iceland. Above the city towers Mount Aksla, from whose top there is an inspiring view, not only over the city itself, but also out over the numerous surrounding islands, with the soaring peaks of the Sunnmøre Alps in the distance.

In the park at the foot of Mount

Aksla stands a statue of Gange Rolf (Göngu-Hrólfr), a gift of the City of Rouen in France. According to the sagas, a brother of his became a great leader in Iceland, and a number of other prominent settlers there came from the Møre-district.

Next a short stop was made at the colorful fishing village of Maaløy, the scene of a notable commando raid by the Allies in World War II. Farther south, the mouth of the Nordfjord was crossed, and the ship threaded narrow channels passing close to the foot of the Hornelen mountain, which rises nearly 3000 feet virtually perpendicularly from the sea. This mountain was called Smalsarhorn of old, and as an example of King Olafur Tryggvason's agility, the saga relates that he climbed this steep mountain and left his shield near the top of the steep cliff as tangible evidence of his achievement.

We had now reached the district of Firdafylke (Fjordane); from that part of Norway came the first settlers of Iceland, the foster-brothers Ingólfur and Hjörleifur, not to mention several others of our illustrious forefathers.

Upon our arrival in Bergen, we immediately were on our way into Sogn. Journeying through some of Norway's most idyllic scenery, as well as, on the other hand, some of the most awe-inspiring, we continued around and across Sognefjord, until we reached Balestrand in the evening.

Sogn is a very rugged and impressive mountain and fjord region. Bale-

strand, in particular, is noted for its scenic splendour — one of the most popular summer resorts in Norway. After a most pleasant but all too short a stay there, we headed back to Bergen on board one of the fjord steamers, seeing much of scenic Sognefjord on the way, and experiencing in a degree the sudden wind squalls for which the fjord is noted.

From Sogn came a large number of the settlers of Iceland, including some of the families who played a fundamental part in the political and cultural life of the pioneering period of the country.

Bergen, which was the next stop on our extensive tour of Norway, is the country's second largest city, with about 150,000 inhabitants, suburbs included. Indeed "a lovely and charming town", it is located in uncommonly attractive surroundings. It is Norway's "City of Seven Hills", and from the highest of these, Fløyfjellet, there is, on a clear day, a magnificent view of the city and its environs. Bergen, on the other hand, is noted for its heavy rainfall, but we have no cause for complaint on that score, as our day there was, for the most part, one of radiant sunshine.

Bergen (or Bjorgvin as it was known in earlier days) is a very old and historic city, founded by King Olafur Kyrr (the Quiet) in 1070. For nearly 900 years it has been one of the most important seaports of Scandinavia, due in no small measure to its excellent location for trade with Western Europe and other parts of the world. Formerly, for centuries, it was the centre of the far-flung activities of the Hanseatic merchants, who also loom large in the history of Icelandic trade and commerce.

In Bergen there are, therefore many reminders of the long stay of the German merchants in the city and their domination in commercial matters. That is particularly true of the Hanseatic Museum, which presents a vivid picture of the daily life of the merchants and their trade policies far from being always of the admirable kind.

St. Mary's Church, the oldest building in Bergen, and one of the oldest and most interesting churches in Norway, also reveals in many ways its long time connection with the German merchants.

Bergen, a cultural as well as a commercial center, can point with pride to many of Norway's greatest sons as its own. A number of these are commemorated by statues in their native city. In Bergen there also stands a prominent place Gustav Vigeland's statue of Snorri Sturluson, similar to the one at Reykholt already mentioned.

Among the most important sights in the vicinity of Bergen are "Trollhaugen", the home of Edvard Grieg, the famous composer, now a museum; the manor house of Christian Michelsen, who occupies a special place of honor in the history of Norway because of his wise and effective leadership during the period of crisis when Norway and Sweden came to the parting of the ways in 1905; and Fantoft Stave Church, another splendid example of the unique Norwegian wooden churches of that type, set in natural surroundings which strikingly accentuate its beauty.

From Bergen we continued our journey south along the Norwegian coast to Haugesund, but from the general area, Rogaland and Agder,



large number of rich and powerful chieftains migrated to Iceland.

King Haraldur hárfagri (the Fair-haired) is buried in Haugesund, and on his burial mound the Norwegians erected to his honor an impressive monument in 1872, on the thousandth anniversary of the great battle of Hafrsfjord, according to the traditional date of that fateful event in Norwegian history. For the battle in question marked the final victory of King Haraldur over his opponents and the unification of Norway under his rule, which, in turn, resulted in a veritable exodus of leading Norwegians and their followers to Iceland.

The boat trip from Haugesund to Stavanger, across Boknefjord, on a warm, calm summer day, such as we were favored with, is a delightful experience; the fjord country, with its magic, passing in a richly varied panorama, is a sight to remember.

Stavanger, about the size of Reykjavík, is the capital of the district of Rogaland and is the present-day center of the Norwegian fish-canning trade. It has a history spanning more than a thousand years, and, as in the case of Bergen, the commingling of the old and the modern gives to the city a character all its own.

Its most important historical monument is the Cathedral, one of the most beautiful stone churches in Norway, erected in the 12th century. Several sculptured figures adorn its interior, including a head-portrait of Magnús lagabætir (the Law Mender), noted, as his surname implies, for his law-making activity, which basically concerned Iceland.

When one drives from Stavanger out to the Sola Airfield, a few miles to the South, the road skirts Hafrsfjord,

the scene, as already indicated, of the great naval battle so decisive for the settlement of Iceland. Somewhat farther south is Jæren, in the district of Agder; along with other settlers of Iceland from that area was Þorvaldur, the father of Eric the Red.

On a beautiful summer evening we flew from Sola Airfield to Oslo. Norway, seen in all its grandeur from the air, was certainly a majestic sight, and Oslo, nestling among its hills on the gleaming fjord, presented a lovely picture in the evening sun.

After a short visit in the Norwegian capital, we continued by ship to Denmark, where new and enriching experiences awaited us after our glorious month in Norway.

In as much, however, as this account is supposed to deal especially with our Norway visit, I am constrained to describe only briefly our equally rewarding though much shorter stay in Denmark, largely limited to a week in Copenhagen.

Our primary purpose in going there was to attend the Second International Congress of Classical Studies, where I had the honor of representing the University of North Dakota. It was a truly international gathering, with some 500 participants representing institutions of higher learning and learned societies of thirty countries throughout the world.

And Copenhagen, Denmark's beautiful and historic capital, a cosmopolitan city of more than one million people, was an excellent choice for such a conclave of scholars in the classics and the humanities, for it is a great cultural center of long standing, with numerous excellent museums. Mrs. Beck and I made good use of the opportunity to visit the most important of these.

The National Museum, truly "a picture-book of the history of culture", in many-sided and colorful manifestations; The Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, characterized as "one of the finest and most representative museums of Sculpture in the world"; and last but not least, Thorvaldsen's Museum. Naturally, this unique collection had a special interest for us, as the great Bertel Thorvaldsen was Icelandic on his father's side. His museum not only houses his numerous works, famed for their classic beauty and plastic perfection, but is also his final resting place. His tomb is in the court-yard of the Museum, where he was buried beneath a bed of roses in accordance with his wishes.

While in Copenhagen we spent a most pleasant afternoon at the residence of Dr. Sigurður Nordal, the distinguished scholar and Icelandic Minister to Denmark, and Mrs. Nordal. On the way from our hotel Dr. Nordal thoughtfully took time to show us some of the sights of Copenhagen, including the beloved and much photographed bronze figure of "The Little Mermaid", inspired by H. C. Andersen's story of the same name. Dr. Nordal informed us that the Mother of Edvard Eriksen, the sculptor, had been Icelandic.

Naturally, we did not visit Copenhagen without paying our respects to The Arne-Magnean Collection of Old Icelandic manuscripts, where the Curator, Professor Jón Helgason, another noted Icelandic scholar, was kind enough to show us personally some of the most treasured of these manuscripts, including the one of Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*. Dr. Helgason also took us on a tour of the famed Student Residence (Regensen-Garður)

at the University of Copenhagen, the home, in their student days, of a great many of our Icelandic poets and political and cultural leaders. Prof. Helgason further directed us to the house where Jón Sigurðsson, the great Icelandic statesman and champion of Icelandic independence, resided during his many years in Copenhagen. Although we only had an opportunity to view his long-time home from the outside, we felt as if we were standing on sacred ground.

A highlight of our stay in Denmark was a special tour from Copenhagen to Trelleborg, a viking fortress dating from about the year 1000, located near the City of Slagelse in Western Zealand. On the return trip stops were made at Ringsted, for the purpose of visiting its noteworthy St. Bendts (Benedict's) Church, the burial place of several Danish kings, and at Roskilde, to visit its famous Cathedral, where the majority of Danish monarchs have their final resting place in surroundings of rare ecclesiastical splendor and magnificence.

This tour across Zealand gave us an opportunity to see something of rural Denmark and its idyllic charm, well described as follows: "Here are no breath-taking beautiful landscapes but the countryside almost everywhere is so welcoming and pleasant that one has the impression of wandering in a carefully cultivated garden." (Dorothea Ogrizek.)

A day spent in the attractive University town of Lund in Sweden was a memorable experience, and not least our visit to the celebrated Lund Cathedral. Romanesque in architectural style, this impressive stone edifice was founded late in the 11th century and completed about the year 1200.

and richly decorated. Its most unique attraction is its renowned medieval clock, equipped with two dials between which appears on the stroke of twelve o'clock noon on Wednesdays, and an hour later on Sundays and other holy days, the Three Kings paying their homage to the Virgin Mary and Child, at the same time as the clock chimes out the sonorous medieval hymn of adulation: "In dulci jubilo." It is a deeply moving experience to join, as it were, in the homage of the Three Kings to the Virgin and the Infant Saviour, and thus become one with the generations.

This visit to Lund was, in a sense, a fitting climax to our sojourn in Scandinavia, for shortly afterwards, as guests of Icelandic Airlines, we flew from Copenhagen to Reykjavík. En route we stopped briefly at Sola Airfield near Stavanger, and once more had a glimpse of historical Hafrsfjord, which again brought to our mind the close ties linking Norway and Iceland.

Our final week in Iceland was a busy one, crowded with public and private functions, again amply attesting the proverbial Icelandic hospitality. These last days in Iceland also included visits to places of special interest. At the kind invitation of Mayor Gunnar Thoroddsen of Reykjavík, we inspected the capital's thermal heating plant, from which the water from the hot springs in the vicinity is piped into the city for heating purposes; and we were also shown the city's hydro-electric power station at Ljósafoss on the River Sog. These are really remarkable developments and are striking illustrations of the increasing use which the Icelanders are making of their great natural resources.

Thanks to my cousin Eysteinn Jónsson, the Minister of Finance in the Icelandic Government, we were also able to visit the interesting Reykjanes peninsula with its "extensive fields of black lava eroded into fantastic shapes", to borrow an apt description from Mrs. Beck's address on our Icelandic visit. In the course of this trip during our last Sunday in Iceland we visited the historic Strandarkirkja, situated on the southern coast of the peninsula, and also saw Herdísarvík, where the poet Einar Benediktsson spent the last years of his life.

As we spent the evening with relatives and friends in Hafnarfjörður on the way back to Reykjavík, we saw one of those marvellous Icelandic sunsets which defy description; and only an evening or two before we had seen the sky aflame with surging seas of Northern lights, for now it was early in the fall.

The next evening, on September 7th, we flew back home to the United States with Icelandic Airlines, our pilgrimage to Norseland completed.

Spiritually and culturally, it had been an enriching experience beyond ordinary calculation. In Iceland and Norway, in particular, we had come to realize better than ever before how deeply our racial and cultural roots are embedded in the soil of the North. In short, we returned to America with a deeper appreciation of our rich cultural heritage and with commensurate admiration for the progressive and liberty-loving Northern nations whose traditional pioneering spirit expresses itself in peaceful pursuits at home and abroad.



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## A Visit In Bonnie Scotland

This summer it was my pleasure to visit Scotland. Come with me and I will take you to some of the places of interest I was privileged to see.

The Empress of Scotland docked at Greenock on the Firth of Clyde about six-thirty in the evening of May 23rd. There was an air of excitement as many of the passengers were returning "home" to visit relatives and friends after several years' stay in Canada and other parts of the world. Scotland welcomed us with open arms with the sun shining over the hills and the heavens a deep azure blue. My companion was a Scottish girl who was visiting relatives in Scotland and I was received as a relative, too. I shall always feel a special kinship for the Scottish people, but particularly, of course, for my new found cousins.

Burns Cottage, Alloway, in Ayrshire, is visited by hundreds of tourists every year. In the Burns Cottage Catalogue the opening paragraph is—"When on 15th December, 1757, William Burnes married Agnes Broun, daughter of a Kirkoswald farmer, he brought his bride to the 'auld clay biggin', built by his own hands, which has since become one of the chief shrines of world pilgrimage. Here, in the 'but' or kitchen, was born to them their eldest son, the Poet of Humanity, in the widest sense of the words, upon whom 'a blast of Janwar' win' blew hansel' on the twenty-fifth day of the year 1759.

William Burnes, as the surname was spelled, owned the cottage until 1781, when it was bought by the Incorporation of Shoemakers in Ayr for £160. They rented it to various tenants one

of whom turned it into an ale house. They realized the value of their property and made it attractive to patrons of the ale house and to visitors who came to Robert Burns birthplace. In 1881 the Alloway Burns Monument Trustees purchased the property from the Corporation and have made it a national shrine which is open to the public. There is an admission charged for the upkeep of the cottage and property. It is kept in excellent state of repair and is a credit to the trustees of the fund. There are many articles of furniture, etcetra, in the cottage and museum. To mention a few—Robert Burns writing desk, an oak chair, Holy Bible, several letters written by the poet, as well as original manuscripts of his poems.

Perhaps the two most famous lochs in Scotland are Loch Lomond and Loch Katrin. All lakes in Scotland are called lochs with one exception, Lake of Menteith. A drive around Loch Lomond on a bright sunny day is a must for the traveller. There are towns and hamlets along the way where one could spend hours. The countryside is so peaceful with cattle and sheep grazing on the hills. One feels very humble in the places made famous by the bards of old.

At one point on Loch Lomond, about twenty-five feet off shore, there is a statue of a three year old boy which bears the inscription, "To Our Beloved Son." The story goes that a little boy drowned at that point and his parents erected the statue in his memory. There is no name so his identity is not known.

A boat trip on the Firth of Clyde was one of my many interesting experiences. We sailed on the St. Colombo from Gourock to Airdryshaig and took a bus back to Glasgow. The boat carries cargo as well as passengers. Many of the towns along the route depend on the boat for mail and supplies. There were many passengers aboard, including a group of school children, accompanied by their teacher, who were on a day excursion. We were delighted to hear them sing Grace before dinner.

One of the towns we found interesting was Pitlochry in Perthshire, which lies in the valley of the Tummel River near the Old Road to the Isles. It is on the main road from Edinburgh to Inverness. It is known as the holiday resort in the heart of the Highlands. It is said that one can enjoy any sort of holiday pastime in Pitlochry whether it be golfing in the picturesque hills, swimming in the rivers, horse-back riding, boating, hiking or just relaxing.

In Pitlochry one can find at Loch Faskally Dam the fish ladder where the salmon clocks in on their way up to their spawning ground.

In 1951 Mr. John Stewart, a great lover of the stage, founded "Scotland's Theatre of the Hills" in Pitlochry. Opening night was May 19 to which all the London dramatic critics were invited. That year the plays were presented

in a tent. The stage is quite large and the auditorium shallow and fan-shaped. They continued to hold the shows there for two years but now have a semi-permanent building. It has a capacity of approximately five hundred. For the short period of time the theatre has been in existence it has enjoyed surprising success. The play I saw was "The Lass wi' the Muckle Mou,," a Scots comedy by Alexander Reid, which I enjoyed very much.

When I was in Pitlochry early in July the town was holding Tartan Week. Visitors and the home folk were asked to wear their tartans whenever possible and they responded to the request very well. As I didn't have any tartan I was given a lovely Tartan handkerchief. Contests of different kinds were held both to arouse interest and to increase trade in the town. There was a great deal of variety in what one could see and do. The sponsors of Tartan Week deserve a lot of credit for their splendid idea for stimulating interest in their town.

It has been said that one can always arrive in time for tea in Scotland. I had that happy experience on many occasions during my visit.

Oh, to have the time to spend a summer in Scotland, travelling to the smaller towns and visiting with the very hospitable Scottish people.

Mattie Halldorson

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# THE FRONT COVER VERSE

The two verses on the front cover, very appropriately selected by The Rev. R. Marteinsson, D.D., are from the first of the fifty Passion-Hymns, "Passíusálmar", of The Rev. Hallgrímur Pétursson (1614-1674). Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher, D.D., of Australia, has translated parts of thirty of the Hymns (two from Hymn 1) and in 1923 published the translation in a booklet which he entitled: "Icelandic Meditations on the Passion". To this title he added the following explanatory subtitle: "Being Selections from the Passion-Hymns of Hallgrim Petursson Translated from the Icelandic and Arranged as a Series of Meditations for Each Day of the Month."

The translator's Foreword begins with these words:

"The Passion-Hymns of Hallgrim Petursson, 'the flower of all Icelandic poetry', are recognized as the outstanding religious classic of a noble litera-

Awake my mind, awake my soul;  
From ransomed lips let praise forth  
roll;  
While heart and tongue as one prepare  
The Master's passion to declare.

For me He left His throne on high,  
For me He yearned to come and die;  
And I in turn should long to raise  
To Christ my Lord a hymn of praise.

My soul is whelmed in bitter shame;  
Alas! how low burns love's bright flame:  
Jesus has suffered in my place,  
Too slight my memory of His grace.

My meditation shall be sweet,  
As on that sacrifice complete  
I dwell, which man, by sin defiled,  
With holiest God hath reconciled.

ture."

The temptation cannot be resisted to include from the Foreword the following beautiful tribute:

"If there is one Icelandic name above others which I should like to have the privilege of associating with these translations it is that of the late Frú Lara Bjarnason of Winnipeg. It was the gift of an old copy of Hallgrim's poems, sent just before the final call came to her in a ripe old age, that moved the writer to further work on the hymns she loved. Almost with dying hand she wrote to prepare hospitality for him during his visit to Iceland. To have known her and her husband is an enrichment of life."

The Meditation for the first day of the month, under the title "Invocation" is a translation of verses 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 of the First Passion-Hymn. The translation and the original follow:

Upp, upp, mín sál, og allt mitt geð,  
upp, mitt hjarta og rómur með;  
hugur og tunga hjálpi til;  
herrans pínu eg minnst vil.

Ljúfan Jesúm til lausnar mér  
langaði víst að deyja hér;  
mig skildi og lysta að minnst þess  
mínun Drottin til þakklætis.

Innra mig loksins angrið sker,  
æ, hvað er lítil rækt í mér;  
Jesús er kvalinn í minn stað,  
of sjaldan hef eg minnzt á það.

Sál mín, skoðum þá sætu fórn,  
sem hefir oss við Guð, Drottin vörn,  
fordæmda aftur forlikað;  
fögnuður er að hugsa um það.

When conscience speaks with  
threatening voice,  
'Tis this that bids the soul rejoice:  
The Saviour's blood and bitter pain  
Shall wake the triumph psalm again.

Thy spirit, gracious Lord, bestow;  
Anoint Thy servant's lips, that so  
His song may to Thy glory be,  
And fire men's hearts with love to Thee.

Hvað stillir betur hjartans ból  
en heilög Drottins pína og kvöl?  
hvað heftir framar hneyksli og synd  
en herrans Jesú blóðug mynd?

Ó. Jesú, gef þinn anda mér,  
allt svo verði til dýrðar þér  
uppteiknað, sungið, sagt og téð,  
síðan þess aðrir njóti með.

(1943 Edition)

W. J. L.

## Wins Major Award



**Marian Eileen Martin**

At the annual commencement exercises of United College in Winnipeg Nov. 3 Miss Marian Eileen Martin, who graduated in arts last spring, was awarded the Governor-General's bronze medal for the highest average in second, third and fourth year arts.

Miss Martin is a daughter of Mrs. Margaret Martin of Winnipeg and a granddaughter of the noted pioneer, the late Johannes Einarsson of Calder, Sask.

Marian's brother, **Joseph Edward Martin**, who is in second year arts, received the United Church Auxiliary scholarship and the Lloyd Hignell scholarship.

## Wins Jewellery Design Prize

★

**Miss Carol J. Feldsted**, Vancouver artist, formerly of Winnipeg, won the prize awarded in New York City this fall by the Diamonds United States of America Collection. She designed a diamond bracelet and a diamond pin which were made up in diamonds and platinum, valued at \$20,000. Among the judges of the show were movie star Irene Dunne, Raymond Loewy, industrial designer, and Pierre Matisse, son of the great painter. Last year Miss Feldsted was awarded her doctorate in the history of Art from the University of Paris. (See Icel. Can. Autumn '54) At present she has a studio in Vancouver where she does photography and oil painting. Her photography is done by a special color process which produces a life-like appearance.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE SASKATCHEWAN ICELANDERS,

**A Strand of the Canadian Fabric**  
by **Walter (Valdimar) Jacobson Lindal**  
The Columbia Press Ltd., pp. 365, \$4.00

Walter (Valdimar) Jacobson Lindal was born in Iceland in 1887 and was a tiny infant when his parents emigrated to western Canada. As a young man he earned title to a homestead near Leslie, Saskatchewan, by cultivating the land with plough and oxen. By arduous labours he earned the money to attend college, graduating from Wesley College in 1911 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and from the University of Saskatchewan in 1915 with the degree of Bachelor of Laws. He left his law practice in Saskatchewan to enlist in the Canadian army overseas, serving with distinction in France and Belgium. He was invalided home, and following his recovery in health, he practised law in Winnipeg and for five years lectured in the Manitoba Law School. In January, 1942, he was appointed Judge in the County and Surrogate Courts for one of the Judicial Districts of Manitoba.

W. J. Lindal's "The Saskatchewan Icelanders, a Strand of the Canadian Fabric" is a fascinating and extremely detailed study of the fine contribution of one of the ethnic groups to the growth and development of a great Canadian Province. He shows that the Icelandic strand which has been woven into the Canadian fabric has helped to give colour and strength to the whole structure.

Judge Lindal had established himself as a man of letters with the publication of two previous books.

"Two Ways of Life: Freedom or Tyranny?", The Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1940; and "Canadian Citizenship and Our Wider Loyalties", published by Canada Press Club and printed by Canadian Publishers Ltd., Winnipeg, 1946. The present volume "The Saskatchewan Icelanders", however, places him in the forefront of contemporary Canadian authors.

Only a scholar with Judge Lindal's background and command of both the English and Icelandic languages, together with his knowledge of the Saskatchewan locale and of many of the settlers and their descendants, could have attempted such a work and brought it to such a successful conclusion. "The Saskatchewan Icelanders" will prove of inestimable value to future historians, since much of the information contained within its covers has been obtained at first hand as a result of painstaking work and has been chronicled with great care.

The migration of Icelanders to the unknown west in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was the result of the reaction of the adventurous viking spirit to the oppression of foreign monopolies and controls in their native land, as well as to the terrible hardships resulting from volcanic action and unusually severe weather, producing widespread poverty and want. Those Icelanders who remained to fight and overcome these trials possessed great courage, but those who migrated possessed in addition that venturesome spirit which enabled them to face "those evils which they knew not of".

The aims of these migrants were to



obtain for themselves and their descendants the necessities of life, an opportunity to continue and develop their cultural heritage, and the right to participate in the growth and expansion, political, social, moral and intellectual of the nation of which they were to become a part. The story is one of almost incredible hardships, faced with courage and determination.

For an understanding of the contribution made by the Icelanders and of the reason why they have so easily and naturally merged into the body of Canadian citizenship the opening chapters of this book list a number of fundamental causes. These include the love of freedom which impelled the Norse forefathers of the Icelanders to refuse to submit to the yoke of Harold the Fairhaired, thus leading to the settlement of Iceland.

Evidence from studies by Prof. Steffensen is produced based chiefly on skull measurements and blood groupings. His study indicates that the Icelanders are an admixture of Norse and Celtic strains. A similar blending of the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic elements in the formation of the British nation is pointed out. The tendency of nordics to merge with other races and be assimilated is perhaps best exemplified in the settlement of Normandy by the vikings, though similar settlements also occurred in the Austrian Tyrol and in other regions.

Icelanders have from the earliest times been well acquainted with democratic processes. Their parliament the Althing has been recognized as the Grandmother of Parliaments, antedating even the Mother of Parliaments of Great Britain. It is but natural that the Icelanders of Saskatchewan should have played a prominent part as lead-

ers in that province by holding public office.

Although the Icelanders have merged easily and naturally into the life of the Province of Saskatchewan, they have still retained their love of the great and continuing literature of their homeland.

The place of Icelandic as a living and as a root language is discussed. This has been well recognized by the Icelanders themselves, and provision made for the continuance of Icelandic studies by the establishment of a Chair of Icelandic at the University of Manitoba. To this worthy cause the Saskatchewan Icelanders contributed generously.

The tradition among the Icelanders of a love of learning for its own sake led to the establishment of schools and libraries as a first requisite even in the early settlements. The tradition of self education—passing on by word of mouth the best in the literary efforts of the period and of the past lay at the foundation of Icelandic culture. Because of their love of learning the Icelanders have produced many eminent scholars and Icelanders or students of Icelandic descent have often swept the boards at Canadian Universities.

The Saskatchewan Icelanders accepted not only the privileges but also the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship. Their voluntary enlistment in great numbers in the armed forces during both the First and Second Great Wars is but one evidence of their loyalty. The story of their war effort is well depicted in the pages of this book.

The illustrations consisting of photographs and drawings are of great value in indicating, among other things, the nature of the hardships

undergone by the pioneers, while the maps are valuable in showing the exact locations of regions of settlement. A few of the illustrations that are of particular interest include those showing: The difficulties in clearing land of trees and stumps; of cutting grain with an ox-drawn binder; the primitive sod-roofed houses of the early settlers as contrasted with the modern dwellings now inhabited by their progeny; and the evolution of transportation methods from the ox-drawn sleigh to the jet plane.

This is a historical document of inestimable value, which will be even more appreciated in future years. It will certainly find a place in the historical archives of this country. No one can fail to realize that the compilation of such a mass of information into a compact and enthralling story has been a laborious and exacting task. The author has earned not only the commendation of the present generation but has placed all future generations of Canadians greatly in his debt.

★

I. G. A.

### ARCTIC LIVING:

#### The Story of Grimsey.

by The Rev. Robert Jack  
The Ryerson Press, Toronto,  
pp. 181, \$4.00

It is always refreshing to read a book dealing with a relatively new or little known topic. For that as well as other reasons, it is interesting to read Rev. Robert Jack's book on life in Grimsey, an island about forty-five nautical miles north of Iceland and wholly within the Arctic Circle. The Rev. Robert Jack wrote "Arctic Living", from a position of special advantage. As a resident of Grimsey for about seven years he writes from personal experiences; as a foreigner, born

and raised in Scotland he writes from the perspective of an outsider.

In his primary task of telling the story of the sixty odd inhabitants of the island Mr. Jack succeeds in bringing the reader to the people—right into their homes and into their church. He relates incidents which give a clear picture of their struggle against the elements and gives illustrations which reveal how contented the islanders are in spite of the absence of even the simplest luxuries of modern life.

The love of the islanders for Grimsey is noteworthy. The author speaks of Geirdal, a man of seventy. He relates how he saw "his face changing from the clear ruddy complexion which had braved all weather to a marbled greyish white". "I shan't last much longer", Geirdal confided, "they mustn't take me to a hospital, I want to die and be buried on Grimsey."

Robert Jack was more than the local pastor. To use his own words he was "minister, peacemaker, income tax assessor, schoolmaster and farmer". To this he added the duties of an auditor and in order to qualify proceeded to study the fundamentals of bookkeeping and accounting.

When the coming of spring was late the islanders were often short of hay. This happened to the author himself one year and he became worried. His neighbor, Stebbi, showed him where "small tender blades of grass scarcely an inch high" were to be found on a ridge close to the crevices and ledges of nearby cliffs where sea birds nested. "I raked the deep snow from the seemingly dead turf, while Stebbi scythed deep". They filled sacks with the tiny blades of grass and carried them down to their farmsteads below.

The author does not limit his story

to the islanders but refers as well to seamen from other lands who at times sought shelter in Grimsey. There is the harrowing story of a Norwegian fisherman whose wife and three children had been killed when the Nazis invaded Norway. When the man had finished his sad story Robert Jack felt that he should do something to comfort him. They went to the church where Robert prayed to God to give this man strength and faith. This is one of the best passages in the book; the writing rises to the level of abiding literature.

At other times the author drops down to the vernacular and even slang: "I cracked up"; "I almost put my foot in it"; "let off steam". Some of his descriptive phrases, however, are very vivid: "his huge banana hands". A minor criticism may be made. The author seeks to anglicize Icelandic words and names. In this modern "one-world" a person becomes accustomed to foreign words and names. In the reviewer's opinion the unchanged Icelandic words would have served the author equally well and been more natural. Even the Icelandic letters should have been retained: "reið" instead of "reith", "þorp" instead of "thorp". If changes were made the usual practice might well have been followed: "Stodvarfiord" for Stöðvarfjörður, not "Stöthvarfirth".

The Rev. Robert Jack feels very strongly that "a Higher hand" has guided him to serve for the Kingdom of God where he is most needed—in Grimsey for instance. This fact is borne out not only by what he says in the book but also by his actions. He came to Canada but after serving the Ar-

borg Lutheran congregation for two years accepted a call from Iceland. He relates an incident which clearly reveals his deep sense of mission and service. He had been asked to come to Reykjavík to help out a friend. While in the capital he enjoyed Icelandic hospitality in a modern city. He was sitting at breakfast one morning when an acquaintance handed him a paper saying:

"Cold at Grimsey. News of ice. Read it yourself".

Robert Jack could have stayed a few days more in the comfort and luxury of Reykjavík. He returned to Grimsey at once.

Not only did he serve his parishioners, he lived with them, was one of them. He includes himself when he says:

"Our clothes are ordinary, our amusements simple and our mode of transport rudimentary. We know of modern things, but they are not within reach. The thought of the islanders is moulded by this atmosphere of elementary things".

By way of footnote it may be added that Robert Jack is a missionary for the Icelandic language and literature. By now he speaks Icelandic as well, if not better, than English. He says:

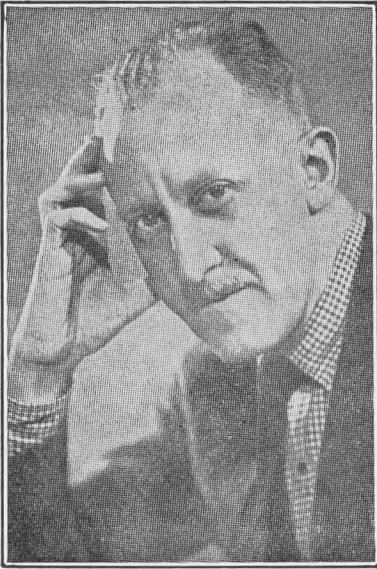
"They (the Icelanders) can read and understand their literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries more easily than an educated man in Britain can follow the writings of Shakespeare. Old and Modern Icelandic are not, as is sometimes said, two different languages".

This book is a valuable addition to existing literature in English on Iceland and its people.

W. J. L.

## IN THE NEWS

### ICELANDIC WRITER WINS NOBEL PRIZE



**Halldór Kiljan Laxness**

The 1955 Nobel prize for literature was awarded to the Icelandic novelist, **Halldór Kiljan Laxness**. He was a strong contender for the prize, the last two years, when it went to Sir Winston Churchill and Ernest Hemingway. The Swedish Academy of Letters, in making the award, cited the novelist's "vivid epic writing, which has renewed the great Icelandic narrative art."

Although a world traveller, Mr. Laxness has written mostly of the everyday life of the people of Iceland. His best known books, outside his own country, are "Independent People" selected in 1946 by the Book-of-the-Month Club in the United States and "Salka Valka", which was made into a movie by a Swedish film company early this year.

While the Icelanders recognize the genius of this author and are pleased that one of their race has received this coveted prize, many are of the opinion that his novels give an erroneous impression of the country by portraying mostly weak and stupid people and social conditions which now do not prevail.

On December 10th the 53-year-old author, whose leftist political leanings have caused bitter controversies, will receive a cheque for 190,214 Swedish Crowns (\$37,000) and the Nobel insignia from the hands of King Gustaf of Sweden at the traditional Nobel ceremony in Stockholm.

★

### DR. PERCIVAL JOHNSON HONORED

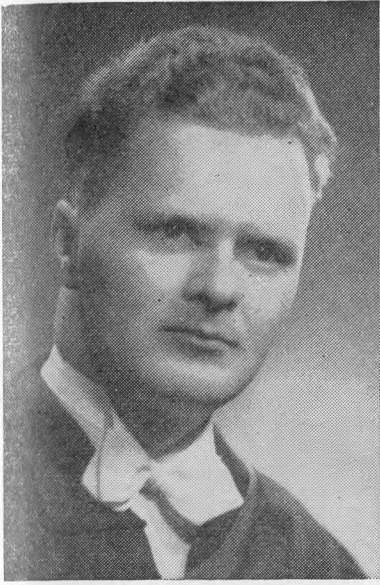
Dr. Percival (Percy) Johnson of Flin Flon was elected president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba at the 70th annual meeting held in September. A month later he was inducted as fellow of the American College of Surgeons at the College's Clinical Congress in Chicago.

Born at Gardar, North Dakota, October 28, 1907, son of Jón and Guðbjörg Johnson, he attended public and high schools in that state and continued his studies in Winnipeg, graduating from the Manitoba Medical College in 1934. He joined Dr. Peter Guttormsson of Flin Flon in 1936, and later succeeded him as head of the Flin Flon Clinic. Dr. Johnson is a director of the Health Plan of the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Co.

His wife is the former Miss Elizabeth Swain of Morris, Man. They have two children: William Jón and Fjóla Ann.



## APPOINTED CHIEF MEDICAL STATE EXAMINER



Dr. and Mrs. S. E. Bjornson of 1080 Dorchester Street, Winnipeg, have just received word that their son, **Dr. Sveinbjorn Stefan Bjornson**, has been appointed Chief Medical Examiner for the state of Delaware, with headquarters at Wilmington.

Dr. Bjornson received his elementary and secondary education at Arborg, and Gimli, Manitoba. After taking a Science course at the University of Manitoba he entered the Manitoba Medical College, receiving his M.D. degree in 1946. Following four years of medical practice at Ashern, Manitoba, he began his studies in Forensic Medicine at the General Hospital, Regina, Saskatchewan. He continued his studies at Yale University where he was simultaneously engaged in research at a hospital in New Britain, Conn. In 1952 he was awarded an Army and Navy Research Fellowship at Harvard University where he continued his studies in legal med-

icine at the Harvard Medical School and acted in the capacity of Visiting Pathologist at the Jordan Hospital in Plymouth, Mass. The New England Journal of Medicine has published his main research projects.

In January, 1955, he was appointed Associate in Legal Medicine at the Harvard Medical School. His present appointment became effective November 3rd.

Dr. Bjornson is married to Helga, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. V. Sigurdson, Riverton, Man. Helga is a graduate in Home Economics, University of Manitoba, and took post graduate studies at the University of Toronto. Dr. and Mrs. Bjornson have three children, Alan, Diane and Kris.

★

## WINS A FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

**William C. Cline** of Los Angeles, Cal., whose mother, Vera, is of Icelandic descent, was last summer awarded a Wolcott Foundation Scholarship for graduate work at George Washington University, Washington, D. C. Announcement of the award to Mr. Cline, a Fourth Estate Club candidate, was made by Nelson Truitt, chairman of the foundation's board of trustees, at the annual High Twelve International convention held in Detroit, Mich., in June.

Mr. Cline, a senior at George Pepperdine College, is editor of the college paper, The Graphic, for the 1955-56 term. Journalism and public speaking have made up most of his extra-curricular activities, his debating record last year being thirteen wins and four losses. He is president of the Los Angeles Chapter of Pi Kappa Delta, national honorary forensics fraternity.

Mr. Cline was born in Salt Lake



City, Utah, and went to California in 1946, graduating from Imperial Valley Union High School at Imperial, Cal., before going to George Pepperdine College. At Imperial Valley Union he was an honor student and Salutatorian in his class.

A gold seal on his high school diploma marks Mr. Cline as a life member of the California Scholarship Federation. The Bank of America award in mathematics and science was given him during his senior year, and at graduation he was named the outstanding boy in his class and received the American Legion Award. He hopes to complete his undergraduate work by next June.

★

#### WINS QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP



**John Dennis Valberg**

**John Dennis Valberg**, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Valberg of Regina, on completing his fourth year in Medicine at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, was awarded the J. A. S. Dorance \$200.00 scholarship. According to the will of the late Dr. Dorance this scholarship is awarded to the

student "resembling most nearly in character and demeanor the late Dr. J. A. S. Dorance.

**Dr. Leslie Stephen Valberg**, a brother of John Dennis, graduated in medicine from Queen's University in the spring of 1953, winning several scholarships (see Icel. Can. Winter 1954).

★

#### WINS ACADEMIC HONORS



**Miss Denise Helgason**

The National Office Management Association, Edmonton chapter, scholarship for 1955 was awarded in October to **Miss Denise S. Helgason**, a graduate of University High School, Edmonton.

Miss Helgason is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Helgason, 11610 75th Avenue, Edmonton, and granddaughter of the late Jónas and Sigríður Helgason, pioneers of Grund in the Argyle district near Baldur and Glenboro, Man.

The scholarship of \$100 is awarded each year to a selected high school graduate entering the faculty of education at the University of Alberta with the intention of qualifying as a

teacher of commercial or related subjects.

It is offered students of Edmonton, Clover Bay, Stony Plain and Sturgeon school divisions and applicants are judged on academic standing and personal qualities.

During her three years at University High School Miss Helgason received consistently outstanding marks, and on her grade XII departmental examinations attained an average of 87 per cent. On graduating she was awarded the Rosborough Memorial Trophy, presented each year to the most outstanding all-round grade XII student.

In addition she also completed her grade X in piano with the Toronto Conservatory of Music and in 1953 she won the Gladys Muttart Trophy for musical achievement. She has taken a leading part in other student activities, having served as editor of the school paper.

A poem by Miss Helgason, entitled "Music Festival" was selected for the Alberta Golden Jubilee Anthology (see Icel. Can. Autumn 1955)

Miss Helgason is now enrolled in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta and is majoring in English.

★

#### ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB NEWS

Saturday, November 19th was "Students' Night" at the monthly meeting of the Icelandic Canadian Club held in the lower Auditorium of the First Lutheran Church with Art Swainson, representing the Leif Eiriksson Club, presiding. As in previous years the three organizations, the Icelandic National League, the Icelandic Canadian Club, and the Leif Eiriksson Club jointly sponsored this meeting at

which students of Icelandic extraction in the educational institutions of Winnipeg were the guests of honor.

J. T. Beck brought greetings from the Icelandic Canadian Club, and Dr. V. J. Eylands from the Icelandic National League. Judge W. J. Lindal presented the Guðrún Norman Estate Scholarship, amounting to \$100.00, to Eric George Clemens. Prof. Finnogi Guðmundsson spoke of the life and work of Halldór Kiljan Laxness, the first Icelander to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Colored slides of the Centennial Icelandic Celebration held in Utah were shown by Mrs. Kristín Johnson. These slides well exemplified the artistic photographic ability of Mrs. Johnson, whose accompanying explanations were of great interest to the audience.

A delicious Icelandic lunch, served by Mrs. Gunnlaugson and her committee, terminated the meeting.

★



Miss Kathleen Lorraine Johnson, a graduate in nursing last May from St. Paul's hospital in Saskatoon, is now on staff at Nipawin Union Hospital. She was an honor student in Grade

XII at Foam Lake, Sask., and valedictorian of her class.

Miss Johnson is the daughter of Ernest and Bertha Johnson, Foam Lake. Her grandparents are Arni and Helga Johnson, of Wynyard, Sask, and Torfi and Jorunn Jonasson, formerly of Vestfold, Man.

★

#### HONORARY LIFE MEMBER



**Mrs. B. S. Benson**

At its meeting in September, the Jon Sigurdson chapter I.O.D.E. presented **Mrs. B. S. Benson** with a life membership in the Manitoba Provincial Chapter I.O.D.E. in recognition of her long and faithful service. She has served as vice-regent for six years and as regent for the past ten years. Honorary regent, Mrs. J. B. Skaptason, read a warm tribute paid to Mrs. Benson by the members and presented her with the life membership certificate and a corsage. Mrs. N. A. Mc-Millan, municipal regent presented the life membership pin to her.

#### APPOINTED TRAFFIC ENGINEER



**W. H. (Bill) Finnbogason**

**William H. Finnbogasson** was appointed Winnipeg city traffic engineer by the Winnipeg City council, succeeding Harry F. Burns who retired Nov. 15, to become consulting traffic engineer with a Toronto firm.

Mr. Finnbogason, previously assistant city traffic engineer, is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Guttormur Finnbogason of Winnipeg.

Mr. Finnbogason graduated in mechanical engineering at the University of Manitoba in 1950 with high honors and pursued post-graduate studies for two years with Westinghouse Company (Canadian) Limited at Hamilton, Ont.

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It took Leif's boat forty days to make the voyage to Vinland. Today freighters cover the distance between New York and Reykjavik in about ten days.

## NEWS SUMMARY

### Bequeaths books to the University of Manitoba

Dean Einar Sturlaugsson of Patreksfjörður, Iceland, who made the splendid gift of Icelandic periodicals and magazines to the University of Manitoba (see Icel. Canadian, Winter 1953) died in Reykjavík September 23, this year. As a further token of his respect and affection for his kinsmen on this continent, he bequeathed to the University of Manitoba all books in his library, of which the university has not already a copy.

★

### The Oldest Icelander

Believed to be the oldest living Icelandic person in the world today, Mrs. Margrjet Olafson celebrated her 102nd birthday on Saturday, September 17th, at the home of her son and daughter-in-law Mr. and Mrs. Joe Olafson, Morris Ave., Selkirk, Manitoba.

Mrs. Olafson came to Canada in 1884 when she and her husband, Jón, settled in Arnes, Manitoba. In 1889 they moved to Selkirk and made their home there from that time on. Jón Olafson died in 1948, at the age of 97. A second son, Olafur, resides in Vancouver. There are 14 grandchildren and 40 great grandchildren.

★

### New Invention Aids Canada's Northern Citizens

The age-old problem of how to clean eider down quickly and efficiently has been solved by an Icelandic inventor, Baldwin Jónsson of Seltjarnarnes, Iceland. Canadian officials of the Arctic Division of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources are interested

in this new invention as a part of a programme for conservation, protection and management of eider ducks, which make their summer homes in Northern Canada.

The tedious and messy job of cleaning eider down has been one of the reasons why larger quantities have not been gathered by the Eskimos. The Ottawa officials have tested the new machine and have found that it cleans the down better than any other known method. This last summer, duck farming techniques used in Iceland were demonstrated to the Eskimos in the hope that they would eventually establish eider duck colonies similar to those in Iceland, where eider duck "farming" is done on a strictly scientific basis. It is expected that this revolutionary eider down cleaning machine will in the future be an encouragement to the Eskimos to gather greater supplies of down and to protect the birds, thus providing them with an added source of income. In Iceland locally produced eider down sells for as high as \$18 a pound.

★

Dr. Richard Beck, head of the department of foreign languages at the University of North Dakota, was this fall appointed faculty advisor to foreign students. Dr. Beck was one of eighteen university professors invited to attend the conference of the Modern Language Association of America held in New York City October 8 and 9. While there he attended one of the meetings of the United Nations as guest of Hon. Thor Thors, Icelandic Ambassador to the United States and Canada.



Dr. E. T. Feldsted, who has been administrator of the British Columbia Medical Research Institute since 1950 and lately radiologist at Vancouver General Hospital, has resigned from these offices to accept an appointment as assistant professor of radiology in medicine at the University of Oregon. Dr. and Mrs. Feldsted and their two children will make their home in Portland.

★

Dr. Robert Helgason and Mrs. Helgason left in October for Chicago where Dr. Helgason will take a post graduate course in surgery. During his absence his brother, Dr. Norman Helgason, will be in charge of his practice in Glenboro.

★

Mr. Arthur K. Swainson, graduate in law from the University of Manitoba, was called to the bar in September. He has opened an office in the Avenue Bldg., Winnipeg, and also in Arborg. His marriage to Miss Marion Catherine Olson took place in November. Both have been active in community affairs. He is president and she secretary of the Leif Eirikson Club.

★

**In The Wake Of The Storm** was presented by the Jon Sigurdson Chapter I.O.D.E. in The First Federated Church, Winnipeg, November 14 and 15, before large and enthusiastic audiences. This is a prize winning play written by Miss Lauga Geir of Edinburg, North Dakota (see Icel. Canadian, Spring 1955). It was directed by Mrs. H. F. Danielson who also played one of the leading roles. Others in the cast were: Al Blondal, Gudbjorg Sigurdson, Thor Fjeldsted, Helga Gutormson, Dave Jensson, Marge Blondal, Shirley Johnson, Ron Bergman and Art Reykdal.

Mr. Skúli Sigfússon, former M.L.A. for the St. George constituency for a period of twenty-five years, was elected honorary life member of the Manitoba Liberal-Progressive Association at its annual convention held in Winnipeg in November.

★

At the annual meeting of the Kiwanis Club of Glenboro in November, Mr. Thomas E. Oleson was elected president.

★

Miss Dorothy Jonasson, the promising young violinist, was one of six Winnipeggers who were awarded scholarships this fall by the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto. She has won scholarships four years in succession.

★

Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, MD/19, succeeds Isaac Pitblado as honorary president of the Alumni Association. Dr. Thorlakson has taken a leading part in the medical profession, being a founder of the Manitoba Institute for the Advancement of Medical Education and Research. In 1952 he received his honorary doctorate of law from the University.

—University of Manitoba  
Alumni Journal, Oct 1955

★

The Chapter "Brú" of the Icelandic National League, celebrated the eleventh anniversary of the Icelandic republic on June 17 with a concert at Mountain, North Dakota. An excellent program had been prepared by the president of the Chapter Mr. G. J. Jonasson and his committee. Dr. Haraldur Sigmar was chairman and the main speakers were Dr. Richard Beck of Grand Forks and Mr. Victor Sturlaugsson of Langdon, North Dakota.



Mrs. H. F. Danielson of Winnipeg appeared in the television program, "Dances Of The Nations", which was shown on the CBC-TV network October 24. An Icelandic boy, Tom Johnson, also took part.

★

Mayor Steve Oliver of Selkirk, Man. was returned to office by acclamation and Mr. W. Indridason re-elected councillor in centre ward, also by acclamation, when nominations were closed Oct. 11 last.

★

An Icelandic Lutheran Church is being erected in Vancouver, B. C. Expectations are that it will be completed in time for opening about Christmas. The church will seat approximately 200 people, and the basement meeting hall will have about the same capacity.

★

"First White Child Born In America", a sixty-page book just off the press, is a story of the birth and christening of Snorri Thorfinnsson who was born in Cape Cod area of Massachusetts in the fall of 1010, and of the second and third expeditions to Vinland the Good. Written by a member of the American Historical Association, it contains footnotes and a genealogy prepared by Dr. Jón Jóhannesson, University of Iceland.

The writer, Solveig Sveinsson of Vancouver whose pseudonym is Ronda Rivers, was in Winnipeg in November visiting her brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Kelly Sveinson. Her novel, **We Loved Them Once** was published by the Vantage Press, New York, in 1954.

★

In the civic elections held in Winnipeg October 26, both Alderman Paul W. Goodman and Paul Thorkelsson, School Board Trustee, were re-elected.

★

Mr. Ed Vopni was re-elected chairman of the executive of the Manitoba branch of the Air Cadet League of Canada at its annual meeting in October.

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## Season's Greetings

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Eighteen Icelandic poets took part in a national competition, composing poems commemorating the nine hundred year anniversary of the founding of the bishopric of Skálholt, which will be celebrated in Iceland in 1956. Rev. Sigurður Einarsson won the first prize of 15,000 krónur; second and third prizes were awarded to Þorsteinn Halldórsson and Þorgeir Sveinbjarnarson.

★

At the invitation of the United States Department of Commerce six businessmen from Reykjavík, Iceland, toured America's major cities in October to study food distribution methods in the United States. They met with leading manufacturers, processors, wholesalers and retailers of food products. Those making the trip were Guðjón Guðjónsson, Thorvaldur Guðmundsson, Magnús Jóhannsson, Gunnar Theodórsson, Leifur Thórhalls-son and Gunnar Thorsteinsson.

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